

early 1970s when patients with Crohn's disease were a diagnostic challenge to physicians. Despite recurrent problems throughout adolescence and early adulthood, the author entered nursing school. She somehow managed to ignore her symptoms until the last day of her training when she was rushed into hospital for a laparotomy. It was then she was told she had Crohn's disease.

In subsequent chapters, the author describes vividly the unpredictable nature of the disease and, more importantly, provides practical guidance for ways to cope. One of the strengths of her account is the emphasis she places on achieving a partnership between patient and physician. Throughout the book, descriptions of physician behaviour enhance this critical relationship. She applauds the fact that her physician gives her as much time as she needs to express her concerns and fears. The whole relationship is best summarized in her comment: "He brought me into the therapeutic plan as a co-conspirator. In allowing me to be part of my own destiny, he encouraged me to channel my energy away from despair and towards recovery." She describes her "love-hate" attitude toward her medications – which, on one hand, are capable of keeping the disease under control and allowing her a fuller life but, on the other hand, can cause embarrassment and frustration from their side effects.

Problems related to sexuality and childbearing are dealt with at length. She points out her need to be reassured that "I would still be accepted and desired as a sexual being" and the fear of being unable to conceive or carry a child "after significant rearrangements of bodily functions" and while taking medications. Other chapters cover such

topics as getting appropriate help; coping with "the pain drain"; dealing with health care providers (including a list of dos and don'ts for nurses); and short chapters by the author's husband, a physician, and her mother (who also has two sons with Crohn's disease).

In the foreword, Dr K.N. Jeejeebhoy says this book should be read by all medical and nursing students. While I agree with his assessment, I would not limit the recommended readership to practitioners in training. It would also be profitable for all members of health care teams who look after patients with Crohn's disease, as well as patients and their families who are attempting to come to terms with this unpredictable illness.

— Dr Bernard W.D. Badley

Dr Badley is a gastroenterologist at Victoria General Hospital in Halifax.

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Not recommended reading

EVERYDAY PEDIATRICS

AUTHOR: Dr Elmer Grossman
W.B. Saunders Company, 55 Horner Ave, Toronto, ON M8Z 4X6
1994/321 pp/\$35.50

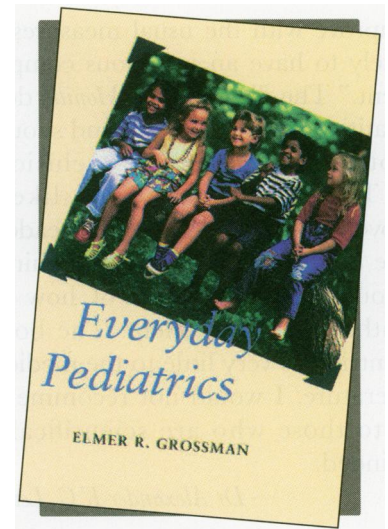
OVERALL RATING Poor

STRENGTHS None

WEAKNESSES Unscientific; lacks coverage of some common problems

AUDIENCE Pediatric students, family physicians, and nurse practitioners

This book is aimed primarily at medical students, nurse practitioners, family physicians, pediatric residents, and junior pediatricians. The author is a pediatrician who has practised at the Berkeley Pediatric Group for 33 years.



The book has 33 chapters. The first few deal with choosing the right practice, organizing the practice, and patient-physician relationships. The next couple of chapters deal with prenatal visits, well-child visits, and well-baby and well-child care. The remaining chapters deal with common pediatric problems, although such problems as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, tic disorder, anemia, and short stature are not covered. Other important topics are covered only superficially. Although 74 pages are devoted to well-child visits and well-baby and well-child care, routine childhood immunization is not even mentioned. In the section on eating problems, the physiologic decrease in appetite from the age of 2 to 5 years is omitted from discussion. Medication doses are not given in most cases. None of the chapters have references.

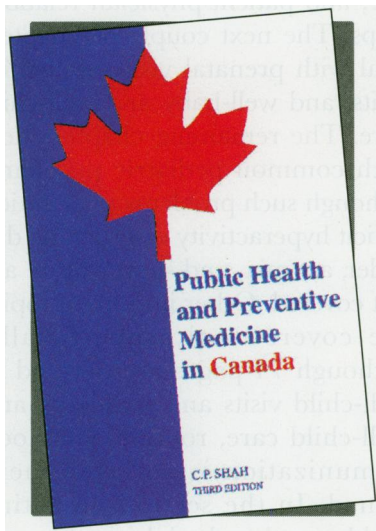
Some of the author's opinions are unorthodox, and some of the advice is unscientific. For example, using imipramine for treating enuresis is somewhat outdated. No mention is made of using oral rehydration to treat diarrhea or using topical corticosteroids to treat eczema. The author suggests that "any diaper rash that fails to

improve with the usual measures is likely to have an infectious component." The diagnosis of *Monilia* dermatitis is usually evident and should not be a diagnosis of exclusion.

This book reads more like a novel than a scientific text. Readers are usually interested in how things should be done instead of how an author would do them. The book contributes very little to the medical literature. I would not recommend it to those who are scientifically minded.

— Dr Alexander K.C. Leung

Dr Leung is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Calgary.



Home-grown data on health issues

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE IN CANADA, 3RD ED

AUTHOR: C.P. Shah

University of Toronto Press, 10 St Mary St, Suite 700, Toronto, ON M4Y 2W8
1994/485 pp/\$38.95

OVERALL RATING Very good

STRENGTHS Range of health care issues addressed

WEAKNESSES No in-depth coverage of topics discussed

AUDIENCE Family physicians

The author has undertaken the ambitious task of introducing the range of issues involved in current disease prevention, public health practice, health promotion, and health services delivery in Canada. The fact that this is the third edition attests to the book's role in educating Canadian health professionals. It also indicates that the changing scene has required that the work be updated, a task that is likely to prove ongoing.

In producing a book that provides an introductory overview of so many topics, Dr Shah has, of necessity, sacrificed depth of discussion in many areas. Most chapters name, define, and briefly outline key concepts, as well as provide references for readers who want more detail. As a result, the book is very useful to those who are unfamiliar with the topics covered and require an introduction. However, it would not serve the needs of anyone who wanted more depth, apart from referring them to other sources.

The book has the great virtue of covering, in one volume, determinants of health, summaries of health of special groups, epidemiology, and prevention of chronic diseases and injuries. It also discusses communicable diseases, environmental and occupational health, the periodic health examination, the history and organization of health services delivery, regulation of health professionals, and emerging issues in health care delivery. All issues are addressed specifically using Canadian information; I am unaware of any other book that does this.

With this focus on Canada, the book provides a good deal of Canadian data on the epidemiology

of specific diseases, costs of many aspects of health care, and the like. As acknowledged in the introduction, considerable time often elapses between the collection of health-related statistics and their publication, so the figures provided are generally at least 2 years old even at publication, and many are much older. However, in most instances the statistics illustrate the issues discussed, and the fact that they do not refer to the current year is not a serious liability; many of the morbidity and mortality figures for various health problems should prove useful to those seeking a single source of information.

This book does not address the practice of clinical preventive medicine directly, although this is a factor discussed in the control of various diseases. Rather, it attempts to cover the array of individual and population-based strategies that can be employed. Practising physicians requiring more specific guidance about what preventive activities to incorporate in their patient care and how to do so would need to refer to additional sources, some of which are referenced here. Anyone who needs an overview of Canadian health care, public health, and preventive issues will find this book valuable.

— Dr Margaret E. Millson

Dr Millson is Assistant Professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics at the University of Toronto.

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